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LETTER DATED 4 AUGUST 1995 FROM THE ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit the text of a statement issued on 4 August 1995 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) V. SIDOROV
Ambassador
Acting Permanent Representative

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Annex

Statement issued on 4 August 1995 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

According to reports that we are receiving, on 4 August 1995 the armed forces of the Republic of Croatia began a major offensive against Serb-populated regions under United Nations protection, known as Serb Krajina. Hardest hit has been the town of Knin, the regional centre.

According to available information, the internationally mediated talks that were held in Geneva on 3 August 1995 between representatives of the Croat Government and of Krajina gave the parties to the conflict a real opportunity to reach compromises that could clear the way for a political settlement. To our profound regret, the Croat side did not show any willingness to work out agreements but proceeded to make ultimatums. We are forced to conclude that Zagreb was already inclined to seek not a political but an exclusively military solution.

We reject this choice by the Croat leaders. The Croat side has violated a number of Security Council resolutions and has ignored the Secretary-General's direct appeal to refrain from military operations. A blow has been dealt to all the efforts of the international community to settle not only the Croat but also the Bosnian conflict.

No bilateral military and political agreements between Zagreb and Sarajevo can serve as a reason or a justification for Croatia's interference in the internal conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the territory of which, moreover, a United Nations peace-keeping operation is in progress Against this background, Belgrade's restraint and its desire not only to avoid being drawn into the military operations being conducted in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina but also to promote a negotiated settlement of the crises in these States, should be highly appreciated.

In the light of the current situation, the Russian side believes that it is vitally important to achieve an immediate cessation of hostilities and to begin, at long last, serious political negotiations based on the proposals put forward by the international mediators in Geneva. Those countries that consider themselves friends of Croatia should encourage Zagreb to renounce its policy of seeking a military solution of the Krajina problem, for the emergence of which the Croat side is largely responsible.

Croatia's continued use of force in Serb-populated regions in its territory and in Bosnia can lead to a drastic change in the nature of the conflicts in the entire territory of the former Yugoslavia and have consequences unforeseen either in Zagreb or in those capitals which, in spite of their languid protests, are actually in solidarity with the Croat side's military action.